



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2009

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## **RABBIT TESTS POSITIVE FOR TULAREMIA**

### ***Rabbit Found at Guajome County Park Tests Positive for Tick-Borne Bacteria***

County Vector Control officials announced today that a young New Zealand white rabbit found in April by campers at Guajome County Park in Oceanside has tested positive for Tularemia, also known as Rabbit Fever.

"Tularemia is a bacterial, vector-borne disease that can be transmitted to humans through the bite of infected ticks," said Jack Miller, Acting Director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "We recommend using insect repellent to prevent ticks and other insects from biting. Flea and tick control products should also be used on pets."

Tularemia is a disease of wild rodents that can be transmitted to humans through the bite of infected ticks. Ticks get tularemia by biting infected rabbits, rodents or other animals. Symptoms in humans include lymph node swelling, headache and fever. Other symptoms include a skin ulcer at the site of the bite, fatigue, body aches and nausea. Tularemia is not transmitted from person to person, but it can be transmitted by handling or eating infected meat, or drinking water contaminated by an infected animal. Tularemia can also cause death in rare cases.

#### **To avoid tick bites:**

1. Stay on designated pathways, choose wide trails and walk in the center. Avoid grassy or brushy areas and do not handle wild rodents.
2. Wear light-colored, long-sleeved clothing; tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks.
3. Apply insect repellent to clothing and footwear.
4. Check clothing, body and companions for ticks frequently.
5. Leave pets at home or keep them on a leash. If they have not been already treated with a tick and flea regimen, use insecticide powders or sprays labeled for tick control.
6. Carefully remove attached ticks immediately. Remove embedded ticks by grabbing them with tweezers as close to the head as possible and pulling out steadily and firmly.

If you develop symptoms within three weeks after visiting a tick-infested area, seek medical attention. Tell your doctor that you have recently been in a tick-infested area. For more information about Tularemia surveillance, call the Vector Control Program at (858) 694-2888 or visit

[www.SDVector.com](http://www.SDVector.com).

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